

Draft Meeting Minutes

Volume 51 Number 11

New Mexico Herpetological Society (NMHS)

November 6, 2014

American International Rattlesnake Museum in Old Town Albuquerque

President Scott Bulgrin presided over our meeting attended by a toddler, an infant and 14 adult avid herpers.

Secretary Cosmos read the Minutes of both September 4th and October 2nd meetings. Both were accepted with few additions.

Treasurer Letitia Peirce reported that the balance in the checking account is \$2,608.54.

OLD BUSINESS

Scott recounted that he and son Logan represented NMHS during Expert Day at our New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science on October 5th from 12 to 4 . On September 27th Scott attended the first birthday party of Albuquerque's Valle de Oro NWR and received a thank-you card from the staff. 90 other guests, including NM State Land Commissioner Ray Powell, enjoyed the gathering. Scott is preparing a PowerPoint slide program about critters found on the refuge to show to the staff. Scott and Olivia exhibited herps on October 14th at the Wilderness Expo in Albuquerque's Civic Plaza and helped celebrate the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Wilderness Act. Olivia showed a huge Corn Snake, boa and Western Hognose which kids liked while Scott, in a tiny window of opportunity from 2-3pm, showed a hyper Bullsnake. In front of startled and/or fascinated human onlookers, hyper-snake bit Scott's pinky finger, hung on and drew blood, and let go only after suffering water-into-the-mouth, the standard removal procedure. Hyper-snake went right back in a bag while Scott and a back-up mellower Bullsnake remained in public view. Around 6pm wind caused Scott to call it quits. This was after other exhibitors and their exhibits had vanished-- hours earlier than their scheduled 10pm quitting time. Hands down, Scott told us that NMHS scored a success at the Wilderness Expo.

NEW BUSINESS

Our speaker for the December Banquet will be Vince Scheidt. He will arrive on Wednesday night, stay with Pat Maher, and fly back to California on Sunday. Vince has a Stiletto Snake *Atractaspis* aka mole viper, burrowing asp and side-stabbing snake with the ability to stab sideways even with a closed mouth Southern Africa is home to this snake, though some are also found in the Middle East. Size and coloration depends on the species, of which there are 15 in the genus *Atractaspis*, part of the family Atractaspididae (formerly Lamprophiidae). Taxonomy of this subfamily **Atractaspidinae** has been highly contentious. An array of sarafotoxins are present in the venoms of different *Atractaspis sp.* Sarafotoxins belong to the endothelin peptide (ET)³family.

Our Banquet will take place on December 13th from 6:30 til 9:30 at Church Street Café' which is located just north of and behind San Felipe de Neri Catholic Church in Old Town Albuquerque. NMHS must pay the Café' 20% of the expected \$bill 2 weeks before our event. Scott announced that per person price will be \$20 rather than \$25 because NMHS will pay the \$5 difference. We agreed to pay out \$75 to Bob Myers for treats for our Happy Hour from 5 to 6 at the American International Rattlesnake Museum. Scott assured us that NMHS will have plenty of money in the bank to afford these and other expenses because of income from sales of books at the Festival of the Cranes, membership dues and the silent auction at the Banquet.

Ted Brown reminded us that election of officers is coming up at our December get-together and Bill Degenhardt, Josh Emms, Letitia Peirce, Cosmos, Pat Maher and Scott Bulgrin find themselves vulnerable for re-election. Ted announced that this year's Festival of the Cranes will take place in Socorro, New Mexico on the weekend of November 22-23rd. NMHS will set up in the same room used by NMHS for the past 22 years, that is, the Education Room in the Visitor Center at the Bosque del Apache NWR headquarters. Bring banners and hand-outs. Attendance has been as high as 10,000. Last year a snow storm presented challenges. In other years mosquitoes were a nuisance. Ted also reported that NMHS members removed bucket traps from our survey sites on Sandia Pueblo on Tuesday November the 4th. In February and March of next year different survey sites will be picked out further to the NE in pinon-juniper woodland.

Scott said he had seen in the Alibi newspaper a question sent in to Cecil Adams column, "Can a snake tie itself in a knot or knots?"

Someone mentioned that he or she saw in the November 3rd ALBUQUERQUE JOURNAL that the price of anti-venom serum might be coming down in 2018. BTG in Wales, maker of CroFab, the only anti-venom serum sold in the United States for neutralizing envenomations, and Rare Disease Therapeutics, Inc. have settled a patent dispute. CroFab is sheep-based. RDT's AnaVip is horse-based and made by Bioclon Institute in Mexico. In the tv show Venom ER treatment of snakebite uses a new sheep and goat-based anti-venin.

The USGS National Wildlife Health Center in Madison, Wisconsin announced that in 2013 in eastern and mid-western states Snake Fungal Disease had been found in Northern Water Snake, Eastern Racer, Rat Snake, Timber Rattlesnake, Massasauga, Pygmy Rattlesnake and Milk Snake.

Letitia said that a new species of Leopard Frog has been found in New York City. *Rana kauffeldi*, the Atlantic Coast Leopard Frog, lives in the marshes of Staten Island, at the edge of New York Harbor.

Cosmos brought up that NMHS does not have guidelines for the display in public of native venomous reptiles and volunteered to craft such guidelines which would then be reviewed by our Board.. Neodesha and Vision manufacture cages with locking access doors which make them more than adequate for displaying venomous herps. An advantage for displaying with Vision cages is that they stack. A guideline/directive for displaying any rattlesnake, massasauga, coral snake and Gila Monster in public

would heed herper August Breithaupt's advice/warning (paraphrased): "Keep the venomous herp in the locked cage while in the public display area." And have placards in the public display area with notice: "*These venomous reptiles are owned and on display by _(name)_____. as allowed by NMDGF Permit #__and not by New Mexico Herpetological Society.*"

BREAK TIME

PRESENTATION

Sandy Barnett and husband moved to Albuquerque from Maryland and she now teaches citizen science and heads the New Mexico Box Turtle Committee. Her narrative with slide show was about BOX TURTLE RESEARCH AT JUG BAY WETLANDS SANCTUARY, Maryland, 1.700 acres, a shallow embayment on the Patuxent River, 20 miles east of Washington D.C., 18 miles south of Annapolis, mostly freshwater wetlands, with two tides a day coming from Chesapeake Bay, 3 kinds of habitat swamp scrub, upland meadows, marsh, with episodes of ranovirus every other year. Monitoring of the Sanctuary's noteworthy Eastern box turtle (*Terrapene Carolina Carolina*) population began on 300 acres in late spring 1995 study plots measure 100m x 100m. surveyors walk an assigned 100m in a plot in one hour. Both humans and trained dogs locate the hard-to-find turtles the behaviors of 558 box turtles have been monitored, mostly adults. 89 have been radio-tagged with units weighing seven grams. Individuals are identified by the Kegel Notches filed into the outer edge of the carapace. Sandy participated in the monitoring from 2000 until 2010. Sandy added that box turtles are susceptible to necrotizing bacteria. She noted the deaths of European Fire Salamanders by a chytrid fungus native to Asia: *Batrachochytrium salamandrivorans*, or Bs.. Since 2010 90%+ of European Fire Salamanders in the Netherlands have been killed by the fungus. She let us know that the next Box Turtle Workshop will be held in 2017 by the North American Box Turtle Conservation Committee. Sandybarnett95@gmail.com

Our meeting adjourned around 9:45pm.

Draft Meeting Minutes submitted by Secretary Cosmos

Thank you very much, Bob and Lorraine, for hosting us!